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The Promethean Honors newsletter

Honors College at The College at Brockport

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Spring 2011

# The Promethean: Spring 2011

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THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

# THE PROMETHEAN

## HONORS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011 ISSUE

### HONORS STUDENT AWARDED PRESIDENT'S CITATION

BY ALEX KROLIKOWSKI, PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

It seems strange to be writing a reflection about my experiences at Brockport because a part of me feels like I am still a new student. Often I feel as if I should be frantically sprinting to my freshman International Fiction class, while trying to interpret a crumpled campus map to determine exactly where Lathrop Hall is located. However, as it stands now, I have four undergraduate

years jam-packed with memories that have not only prepared me to pursue my professional goals, but contributed to my personal growth as well. My time at Brockport has taught me that the downtimes where no work is done are just as, if not more, important than the times where we have bursts of productivity.

Although I realize that I have been exposed to this relatively simple lesson for quite some time, it was not until a few months ago that I truly embraced this lesson's message. Throughout my college career I have been dancing between extensive productivity during the week and some (but never enough) reprieve on the weekends. Even though this lifestyle may work for a vast portion of your college career, eventually the burnout will infiltrate the other days of the week and your bursts of productivity will become infrequent.

This risk for burnout is not only seen in higher education, but in the professional realm as well. It is unsurprising that burnout is so prevalent in a society that focuses on extreme and almost unrealistic productivity. In this society, we are so focused on constantly generating output that we often feel guilty for taking time out to relax. Despite the fact that it is beneficial to recognize this dangerous quality of our society's work ethic, if there is no plan to remedy this situation, this realization may be lost.

Fortunately, I read a quote recently, by Howard Thurman, that provides a basis for how to remedy this style of living that we so often subscribe to:

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And go and do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

...continued on page 3



Alex and College President John Halstead at the 2011 Awards ceremony.

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2010 Newsletter  
Award Winner

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK: CELEBRATING THE SENIOR THESIS BY DR. DONNA KOWAL

The senior thesis is the capstone experience of the Honors Program not only because it is a major scholarly or creative project, but because it is a unique expression of each student's intellectual curiosity—and the process of producing it involves working closely with a faculty member who shares that curiosity. Recently, we asked graduating students to provide written reflections on their experience working on the thesis project. We received a very long list of "thank yous" to faculty directors and an outpouring of gratitude for the opportunity to explore a topic of interest in great depth. Here are just a few examples of the remarks from May 2011 Honors graduates:

"I have learned skills that I will use for the rest of my life."

"I have learned ... the importance of 'staying in the moment,' of acknowledging the present, ... and taking 'one step at a time' when it comes to graduate-level work as well as life in general."

"Writing the thesis has taught me a lot about dedication, time management and perseverance."

"My thesis director was always there for me with support, guidance and encouragement throughout the whole process. Completing my thesis has been a significant accomplishment in my life and has truly enhanced my college experience."

"My director's continuous encouragement and support through each roadblock and problem that occurred were of great importance as I completed my thesis. It was truly a worthwhile learning experience on many levels."

"The thesis project allowed me to use my own ideas and critical thinking skills in a way I have never been able to before. I had a chance to be original and creative, while still benefitting from the opinions and guidance of my director."

Upon completion of the thesis and program requirements, each Honors student is 'hooded' with the Prometheus Medal by his or her Thesis Director during the Honors Program Graduation Ceremony. The Prometheus Medal was designed specially for the Honors Program by Robert Marx, Emeritus Professor of Art. Cast in bronze, the medal weighs over one pound and depicts the face of Prometheus surrounded by beams of light. Inspiration for the medal design came from the Prometheus sculpture that stands in front of the Allen Administration Building on New Campus Drive. According to Greek mythology, Prometheus symbolizes the characteristics of intelligence, creativity, and inventiveness—each of these attributes contributes to a successful thesis project.



Photo: Stephanie Cummings

The Prometheus Medal, given to seniors who complete all Honors requirements.

Next week, approximately 45 Honors students will participate in the Honors Program Graduation Ceremony. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate our graduates for their outstanding academic achievement and contributions to the Program and College. I also want to thank all the current Honors students who will be continuing at Brockport next year for your ongoing effort and dedication. Whether you're embarking on a new path or continuing along the current one, you have my very best wishes for ongoing success.

*Dr. Donna Kowal*, Honors Program Director

## HONORS STUDENT AWARDED PRESIDENT'S CITATION (CONTINUED)

BY ALEX KROLIKOWSKI, PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

This quote references a truth that is rarely considered in our success-driven society. For instance, one of the implications of this quote is that if you would like to make the world a better place then you will have to do more than subscribe to society's definition of a well-rounded education. Although my experience at Brockport has taught me that collective education helps us hone and develop professional skills, I have also learned that in order to be effective in society, each individual needs to take a step back from the endless stream of work and thought that we so often consider reality. By doing this, we open ourselves up to opportunities and interests that are unique to the individual, yet will contribute to the collective in a positive way. It is slightly ironic that in order to truly help the collective, we need to first take a step back from it and figure out what we are personally passionate about. Despite this irony, achieving the delicate balance between the effort you put into society and the effort you put into the process of self-discovery is one way to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others.

*"In order to be effective in society, each individual needs to take a step back from the endless stream of work and thought that we so often consider reality. By doing this, we open ourselves up to opportunities and interests that are unique to the individual, yet will contribute to the collective in a positive way."*

~Alex Krolikowski

Throughout my undergraduate career, there have been times when I have become disillusioned with the educational system's focus on preparing students to make a difference in the future, while ignoring what we are able to do now. Often, I find myself desiring to make a difference now rather than putting time into developing skills that will allow me to make an impact in the future. However, by truly appreciating the times of low productivity, we are able to embrace the process of self-discovery and give ourselves more time to determine what we are passionate about. This understanding increases our ability to make a difference in the world now, while ensuring that we will be able to do so in the future as well. So my challenge to all of you is to discover what things you are personally passionate about and use these passions in a way that will make you feel personally fulfilled. Each day, take time out to be unproductive by society's standards, because you may be surprised at how much of a difference it will have on your personal life, the lives of others, and society as a whole.

## ALPHA CHI INDUCTEES: SPRING 2011

COMPILED BY DARLENE WATERS, PROGRAM SECRETARY

The following Honors students were inducted into The College at Brockport Omicron NY Chapter of Alpha

Brittany Bills	Health Science
Matthew Bub	Finance
Odilia Coffta	International Studies
Michelle Earl	Art
Bonnie Gambrel	Mathematics
Jessica Kennedy	Psychology
Jessica Kerr	Spanish
Megan Mahaney	International Business & Economics
Amber Nimmo	English
Charles Passarell	English
Kelsey Ruffo	Psychology
Samantha Vakiener	English
Jaqueline Walker	Biological Sciences



## HONORS CLUB PRESIDENT BIDS FAREWELL BY JENNIFER BRYANT, POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

I came to Brockport as a transfer student with all As from GCC. I had been out of the Army for less than three years and had a two-year old daughter. I was very nervous coming to a campus that was larger and more diverse than GCC. I wondered where I would fit in. I decided to run for the Vice-President/President-Elect position of the Honors Club. I didn't know anyone when I received the honor of being the club's first transfer student to obtain the position, yet I was welcomed with open arms. Over the past two years, I have met and become friends with some of the most dedicated and driven individuals on this campus.

The faculty associated with the Honors Program have been an inspiration to me and many others. The Honors Lounge, where I spend the majority of my day, is where I have met and talked to many Honors students. I have heard their ideas for the Program and the ways they strive for academic excellence. Both students and faculty have pushed me to overcome obstacles and to push myself academically to achieve more than my original goals.

The events this year have been wonderful. With the Redman Road clean-up we have done something green for the community. With Improv Night we had great laughs. The Majors Mixer was an awesome way to continue to help other students on campus. I look forward to our guest speaker at the end of the semester as well. I hope that I have left an imprint on the Program.

I hope you remember to set your goals high, challenge yourself and those around you to make a difference, and take advantage of the opportunities the Honors Program has to offer and you will succeed! Shoot for the moon. "Even if you miss it you will land among the stars." I cannot express enough the gratitude that I feel; thank you so much for making my experience at Brockport one that I will cherish for a lifetime.



Jennifer and her daughter Paige.



The Honors Program now has an official Facebook page! Become a fan by searching "**The College at Brockport Honors Program**" or by typing in the url below. Look for the big 'H' photo and get updates from the Program!

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/The-College-at-Brockport-Honors-Program/191729357528736?sk=wall>



## EDITOR'S FAREWELL

BY DANIELLE BARTHEL, ENGLISH MAJOR

One day about two and a half years ago, I checked my e-mail as part of my daily routine, and received something that would enhance the rest of my college experience. It was an e-mail recruiting new editors for the student-run Honors Program Newsletter. Considering my desire to go into book publishing and editing after graduation, I immediately knew this was the perfect opportunity for me. I replied to Melissa Broderick, one of the editors at the time, conveying my interest. When I found out that several other people wanted the position as well, I wondered what would end up happening. Would I be looked over for another candidate? Would I be working with other students? Fortunately, I was one of three people who earned one of the editorial positions and we've been working together ever since.

Being one of the newsletter editors has certainly been a positive experience. I truly enjoy working with Jess and Justin; we have a process that fits each of our personalities, quirks and all, and it's something that I'm going to miss once I leave. I know that I'm leaving the newsletter in the capable hands of



Photo: Ginny Weasley  
The *Promethean* editors before the Capitol Building.

Jessica, Justin, and our two incoming editors, Kent Lester and John LaCourt. I have no doubt that it will continue to be a wonderful publication, overseen by our director, Dr. Donna Kowal. Her guidance and commitment to the newsletter and its editors has been greatly appreciated, and has helped to make it into the thriving publication it is today. I look forward to seeing what the new staff comes up with for the future editions of *The Promethean*.

This summer, I will be attending a program at the University of Denver that is designed to prepare me for the publishing world, and I'm really looking forward to it. I know that being a part of the Honors Program, and specifically the newsletter team, has readied me for going out into 'the real world,' and I will always be grateful to the professors and my fellow students who have helped me along my way. (It's funny how clichés like that become true once you've experienced them.) And of course, I could never forget the ever faithful Darlene, our Program secretary, who knows the answers to everything you could ask.

It's going to be a huge transition to move from the comfort of a college atmosphere to the unknown of the future, but it's definitely time for this to happen. I am proud of my contributions to the newsletter, the Honors Program, and the rest of my college experiences, and I can't imagine any other place I would've enjoyed more.



Photo: Dr. Kowal

Jess, Justin, and Danielle after their round table presenta-



Photo: Justin Jackson

A typical newsletter meeting.

## THE CREATIVE HONORS STUDENT: ART AND POETRY

### *Dear Alice, I Miss You*

By Kent Lester

The checkered ghosts all laugh as I count the  
score.

The dancing pawns come forth, and them I  
adore.

And never did I see, they laugh, and dance, and  
count for me.

Three keys are ever turning in an unlocked door.  
While caterpillars gamble in the corner floor.  
And all these things agreed, that I was one of  
them indeed.

The candlesticks were chiming all in open  
chords.  
And hanging portraits reigned atop the cupboard  
boards.  
But music never heard, the kind of sounds I had  
endured.

Nine elephants paraded; they were painted red.  
The spinner wheels declined and all stayed in  
bed.  
The kettles shook the dice, in cups with tumbled  
thoughts and mice.

The lynching rope was hung up from the floor  
with care,  
While jumping rings were wheeling round the  
running stair.  
No golden tickets here, but won't you still come  
back my dear?

The tea cozies are showing off their knitting  
scars,  
And kings and queens were polishing their red  
toy cars.  
A thimble is a kiss, but bloody 52's my bliss.

The looking glass is locked inside a mirrored  
box.  
The rabbit's leash has joined the Captain's bro-  
ken clocks.  
I scorn the kitty's lore, 'n keep staring at the  
unlocked door.

### *Until Death Do You Part*

By Duane Delamarter

There is a dying glow on the beach a mile away. You stare into the  
campfire at your feet and relive the horror of what you did. You reach into  
the cooler for the whiskey bottle and fill your empty glass. You know that  
nauseating image will haunt you every night—the flaming naked bodies run-  
ning toward you, screaming, blinded, dying—the van from which they ran,  
engulfed in a raging inferno.

~

You knew they were in there—two bodies, skin against skin, lips  
touching, tongues exploring, forbidden acts of hunger, lost in intoxicating  
passion. You walked up to the side window and stared into the moonlit  
scene. You knew as the van rocked from within, they wouldn't feel you cut  
the gas line. You knew they couldn't hear the fuel splashing in the sand over  
her climatic screams. You knew they couldn't smell the fumes over the salty  
mist of the surf, of their sweat, of their musty scent of sex. You could see her  
silhouette, like a wolf howling against the full moon—her head thrown back,  
her back arched, her long hair falling over her shoulders, breasts pointed and  
hungry...and watched her in anguish as you tossed the lighter into the gas-  
soaked sand. You could feel him shudder in release, as the gas tank exploded.  
You thought it strange that their screams of pain pierced your brain, the same  
as their screams of passion.

The side door flew open as the windows shattered—the interior  
fully engulfed. First, the woman, naked, running, flames strung out behind  
her, chasing her, arms outstretched and reaching for you—her screams of  
agony melting on her skin. She lay face down in a stinking pile of flaming  
flesh at your feet. Then the man—his muscles exposed and burning, his face  
glowing, skin hanging like stringy moss on a swamp willow. His frantic es-  
cape ended at the edge of the surf, face down, sizzling in the steaming sand—  
both gruesome masses of blackened bone and smoldering death. The van  
burned with a hideous fanfare of melting metal—a gutted framework was all  
that remained—another lonely campfire speckling the summer beach. You  
knew it might be early morning before the horrifying scene would be discov-  
ered...you knew.

~

Faint footsteps pad the sand behind you. The distant glow is  
gone—sirens penetrate the night. Your twin sister glides past you—her arms  
folded tight. Through the reddish haze that spreads the ocean from the night,  
she stares at the burnt out skeleton of the van, a mile away. The putrid stench  
of charred plastic, of melted flesh—of her husband, violates the floating mist  
of the morning.

"Is that him?" Her quivering voice is soft.

"Yeah. It's him. He's gone."

"And her? Was she with him? Is she gone too?"

You take a long drink and empty the glass. "Yeah...her too."

She turns, wraps her arms around you and pulls you close. She  
whimpers softly, her tears fall on your shoulder—your tears fall to the sand.  
You take a worn-out picture from your pocket—lovingly stroke your wife's  
face with your thumb...and toss it into the fire.

"Yeah...her too."

## THE CREATIVE HONORS STUDENT: ART AND POETRY

### *Education*

By Tomas Bavington

The brown haired girl gave me a look, the Irish girl  
asked for more,  
We searched for paths with tree roofs, and floors of  
autumn rot.  
Studenthood raped us, only the light of late spring  
blanched us,  
And reflections of cherished memories hid the empty  
rooms.  
Cantering, galloping. Legs buckled, why must they  
buckle?  
Do not buckle.

Heads faint. The blonde girl she made me weak, she  
winked.  
Nestling, together on the bench, in a fake morning  
mist  
The smell of weed, perspiring like night's rank  
sweat.  
Ashen faced, shivering, but patiently waiting we sit.  
Listening, straining to hear the hoarse murmurs,  
Through England's boreal wind.  
Do you hear them?  
No I don't.  
Are you sure?  
Yes I am.

We sat at desks that screamed, as obscurity to mind  
yields  
And young voices of morning sing last night's prom-  
ise of vomit.  
The Insomniac reawakens. The trailing shadows of  
vapour,  
Black tea and coffee greet. Only the horizonless ideas  
are escaping  
In the fortitude of our rooms, where silence does not  
scare us.  
Some sunlight pierces,  
A laptop hums,  
And the work is done.

### *Negative Space*, By Justin Jackson



### *St. Brigid*, By Natalie Thompson





## HONORS PROGRAM EVENTS: SPRING 2011



The Honors Club adopted Redman Road for the Highway Clean-Up program. Throughout the academic year, Honors students helped to clean up the highway as a way to give back to the community.

The Honors Club, along with the Late Night with Ellsworth staff, hosted the Program's annual Improv Night with Susan Hopkins. Students played a variety of improvisational games and the event was a great way to relieve stress towards the end of the semester.



Several Honors students participated in a flash mob in the middle of Union Square. About 55 dancers dressed up as Harry Potter characters and danced to the song "Magic" by B.O.B. The video of the dance quickly became a viral internet sensation, with over 10,000 hits the first week!

You can check out the Union's big surprise at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9ZspcNmSVs>

### Contribute to *The Promethean*!

The Honors Program Newsletter is an award-winning publication dedicated to the Honors Program faculty, students, and alumni. Articles are written by Honors students and are designed to provide information to the Honors community. Content will include a variety of topics, including research, Honors program news and events, student and professor spotlights, experiences, and creative work. For submissions or more information, please contact Justin Jackson at [jjack4@brockport.edu](mailto:jjack4@brockport.edu).

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 Prometheus sculpture on cover created by Arno Breker.

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